

## Years Of Successful Poultry Breeding For Roland Romig

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Even though Romig describes himself as a semi-retired poultry producer, birds that can be directly traced to his flock are still winning at the shows.

"The man who had the largest number of exhibitor points last year in the American Poultry Association is Lyle Nole from Green Bay, Wisconsin. A number of the (birds) he won with were my birds," Romig said.

Because of a new line in the Farm Show rules which states that all birds shown must be housed in Pennsylvania, Romig will not compete at the Farm Show this year. However, he hopes that in future years he will again be able to take part in the show.

In his many years of showing, Romig has had numerous championships in many different breeds and varieties.

"A few years ago I had grand champion chicken at the Farm Show and had my picture taken with Boyd Wolfe when he was secretary of agriculture. That was a highlight," Romig said.

His success can be attributed to three important factors, Romig said.

First, he would get the best breeders he could find.

"I know where the good breeders are nationwide. A lot of the times, people will only buy birds for breeding purposes that are within a reasonable distance. I bought wherever I could find them."

Next in Romig's recipe for winning is to specialize in breeds that other people don't have.

"I have bred everything that is in the American Standard of Perfection, which is the guidebook and standard by which poultry is bred," Romig stated.

Romig has also helped develop some of the varieties, including the Salmon Favoralle. A few years ago, there were very few of this variety in existence. Now, largely because Romig bred many and sold them, the variety is gaining in popularity.

"There was a well-known judge from England over here a few years ago that saw my Red Sussex — which I was the only breeder that I knew of that bred Red Sussex — and he said mine were better than what they had in England."

The third reason for his success is attributed to experience.

"I know what to breed with what, to get the good quality. That just comes from years of experience. There's no way you can get that in a short period of time," he said.

"You don't read that out of a book, though there are some good books, a lot of it just has to be years of experience."

Just what makes a prize poultry exhibit?

Romig explained that first on the list is type.

"Within each particular variety, you're looking first of all for type. Then you go for color. But of course one of the big things that you take into consideration at a show is the condition of a bird; if they're clean and in good feather," he said.

According to Romig, the Pennsylvania Farm Show is kind of a

combination of a show and fair.

At fairs, they're generally interested more in a display of poultry, where a poultry show is interested in extremely good quality, not such a big quantity.

"One of the reasons I showed more at fairs than at shows was that I needed some income to feed this humongous flock of birds, and you get prize money when you're showing at the fairs," he said.

Additional income was attained from his flock by the sale of chicks, ducklings, eggs and breeders. Exhibiting at a fair often generates interest from buyers looking for birds to show, for meat, or just to have a flock in the back yard.

One other role of the purebred poultry industry is to supply commercial growers with new bloodlines.

"Most commercial flocks are cross breeds and occasionally they need some purebred poultry to strengthen their gene pools," Romig said.

Not only is Romig a veteran poultry breeder, promoter and showman, his is also actively involved in the Pennsylvania Poultry Partners. Currently he serves as president of that organization.

"That's an organization mainly of poultry exhibitors and we've tried to draw different clubs together. There are five different clubs across the state," he said.

The clubs are the Central Pennsylvania Avian Club, Uniontown, Butler Association, Berks and York. Each of the five clubs hosts its own poultry show.

Romig is also a volunteer judge at various shows and has volunteered his services at many poultry

auctions.

Romig also is a strong promoter of poultry and is always willing to help people get started in the business.

"Anytime anybody wants to get a few birds, I say, 'Get the best there are,'" Romig said.

"They tell me what they're interested in. A lot of times I will show them the American Standard of Perfection and say, 'See what catches your eye, and I know where those birds can be found.'

"I guess one of the sad things is that there are some (varieties) you just can't find."

With the help of Romig and other breeders, however, the many breeds and varieties of poultry will persist and, as Romig hopes, the keeping of backyard poultry will once again become commonplace.

## National Farmers Union Calls For Propane Price Investigations

DENVER, Colo. — National Farmers Union (NFU) President Leland Swenson asked for government inquiries into the recent price hikes in propane gas.

"Rural America deserves answers on the issue of drastic increases in propane prices in recent months. Propane is an important source of energy for farmers and rural citizens. We use it to heat our home, dry our crops and power many other agricultural implements."

NFU is urging congressional hearings on propane supplies and prices. Swenson also called for

Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman to initiate an analysis of the impact skyrocketing prices have on the production agriculture sector.

Additionally, the organization is urging a Justice Department investigation of possible antitrust violations in the energy sector.

"We are also concerned with recent congressional attempts to eliminate domestic home heating assistance programs for the needy," stated Swenson. "We urge continuation and full funding of these vital programs."

On a related item, NFU recently

requested the removal of propane from the list of approved alternative motor fuels included in the clean air bill.

"Propane supplies are not infinite. The recent price hikes in propane prices illustrate the delicate balance of supply and demand of this vital commodity," remarked Swenson.

"There are many other more appropriate alternative fuels which can be utilized to meet federal clean air requirements, such as grain based ethanol and its derivatives."

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